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August 26, 2010

The Honorable Mayor Lee Leffingwell
The Honorable Mayor *Pro Tem* Mike Martinez
The Honorable Sheryl Cole
The Honorable Randi Shade
The Honorable Laura Morrison
The Honorable William Spelman
The Honorable Chris Riley

RE: Whisper Valley and Indian Hills

Dear Mayor, Mayor *Pro Tem*, and Council members,

Our community has a history of growth outpacing the upgrading of the roads that carry the traffic from that growth. Our air quality and quality of life suffered as a result. Granting entitlements to a development in the ETJ without regard for the construction or widening of the roads serving that development is a failure to link land use with transportation. Travis County and the City of Austin share responsibility for this and should improve how it's handled so history doesn't repeat itself in the SH 130 corridor.

I wanted to address this issue for Whisper Valley in the PUD ordinance, but the developer and City and County staff have negotiated a compromise that I can support as an incremental improvement: Council can consider road, traffic, and congestion issues each time the Council decides on the timing and amount of a City PID bond issuance for the financing of utilities and other infrastructure for a phase of Whisper Valley.

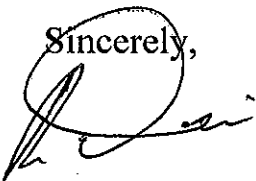
The fact that Council will make most of these decisions after adoption of the Imagine Austin plan raises another issue. Though the City is promoting more density in the central city, much of Austin's growth will still occur in the SH 130 corridor. Because most folks won't be able to afford to live in the central city, most of our future affordable housing will be in developments in the SH 130 corridor, such as Whisper Valley and Indian Hills. This makes the SH 130 corridor a huge part of Austin's future.

Although the City is facilitating a huge amount of growth there by extending water and wastewater, the draft Imagine Austin Vision Statement doesn't specifically mention the SH 130 corridor. In contrast, it specifically mentions urban lifestyles; transit; preserving the stability, character, and history of existing neighborhoods; bicycle and pedestrian ways; the Hill Country; the Colorado River watershed; the Blackland Prairie; and even farm land.

The City's plans for the SH 130 corridor and the quality of life of the affordable homeowners who will live there deserve as much focus as the plans for and quality of life in any other part of the community. If the Vision Statement doesn't recognize the importance of the SH 130 corridor, will the corridor be adequately addressed in the comprehensive plan? Will it be addressed at all? I'm encouraging my appointee to the Comprehensive Plan Citizen Advisory Task Force, Jack Gullahorn, to work to see that the SH 130 corridor is not overlooked. I hope you agree with me that it must not be.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments. Please contact me if you would like to have further discussions.

Sincerely,



Ron Davis
Precinct 1 Commissioner

CC: Travis County Commissioners Court

Tom West, President, President, Park Springs Neighborhood Association

John Williams, Park Springs Neighborhood Association

Sue Edwards, Assistant City Manager

Greg Guernsey, Director, Planning and Development Review Department

Pat Murphy

Steve Metcalfe

Jack Gullahorn, Comprehensive Plan Citizens Advisory Task Force